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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPORT

No. 97-925

COMPLETED ORIGINAL

41.118:97-925

REVISING THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CUMBERLAND ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE AND TO PROVIDE COMPENSATION FOR CERTAIN FACILITIES ON THE SEASHORE

OCTOBER 1, 1982.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. UDALL, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 6882]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6882) to revise the boundaries of the Cumberland Island National Seashore and to provide compensation for certain facilities on the seashore, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Page 1, line 3, strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

That (a) notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of the Interior shall reimburse the Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation for the cost incurred by such corporation in installing transmission lines, transformers, and electric meters which serve the administrative needs of the Federal Government within Cumberland Island National Seashore in the State of Georgia. No such payment shall be made unless—

(1) the Corporation has entered into a written agreement with the Secretary which provides for—

(A) the continued adequate provision of electrical service by the Corporation at reasonable rates to satisfy the administrative needs of the Seashore, as determined by the Secretary; and

(B) the prompt repayment to the Secretary of any amounts paid by the Secretary under this Act, plus interest, in the event of the Corporation's future failure to provide electrical service under terms provided pursuant to paragraph (A); and

(2) the Secretary has performed an audit of the Corporation's records to determine the amount appropriately due the Corporation under the terms of this Act, which amount so determined by the Secretary shall constitute the maximum amount to be paid.

The amount so determined by the Secretary shall be reduced by an amount equal to the sum of all reimbursement for such facilities paid to the Corporation by any governmental or non-governmental source before the date on which payment is made by the Secretary under this Act.

(b) There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provisions of subsection (a) not more than \$338,000.

SEC. 2. Section 1 of the Act of October 23, 1972 (86 Stat. 1066), is amended by striking out "numbered CUIS 40,000D" and substituting "numbered CUIS 40,000D" and substituting "numbered CUIS 40,000E".

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 6882¹ is to reimburse the Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation for the cost incurred by such corporation for the cost incurred by such corporation in installing transmission lines, transformers, and electric meters, which serve the needs of the Federal Government on Cumberland Island in the State of Georgia and to revise the boundary of Cumberland Island National Seashore.

BACKGROUND

In 1967, the Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation (EMC) installed transmission lines and other equipment in order to provide electric power to the residents of Cumberland Island. Prior to that time no central station electric power was available on the Island.

The facilities installed were designed to meet the needs of an anticipated major development of the Island, similar to that occurring at the time at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. The subsequent designation of the Island as a National Seashore on October 23, 1972 precluded that development and thus eliminated any opportunity for the Okefenokee EMC to recoup its investment.

Due to the reduced requirement for power on Cumberland Island, the Okefenokee EMC has suffered an average annual loss of approximately \$20,000, and the continued deficit in its operating costs is expected to rise. Since the EMC is a cooperative and is required under the provisions of the Rural Electrification Act to supply service to the Cumberland users, including the Park Service, the cooperative members on the mainland must cover the losses resulting from the service to Cumberland.

The boundary of the Cumberland Island National Seashore would be revised to exclude a 568-acre tract of privately owned land known as Point Peter on the Georgia mainland adjacent to the Cumberland Island National Seashore. This tract was included in a revision of the boundary map in 1978 so that the Park Service could acquire the land if necessary to accommodate a major expansion of public visitation on the Island.

At the time of the inclusion of the land in the boundary map, it was contemplated that Cumberland Island might eventually be developed for a major program of intensive public use with a daily visitation on the Island in excess of 1400 persons. Planners envisioned that as many as 9000 additional persons per day might visit the proposed visitor center at Point Peter. This program, however, has been revised in light of strong public concern about the environmental impact of large numbers of visitors on the sensitive resources of this pristine barrier island. This concern was reflected in overwhelming public comments submitted to the National Park Service as part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, General Management

¹ H.R. 6882 was introduced by Representative Ginn on July 28, 1982.

Plan and Wilderness Recommendation, and the National Park Service now plans for low density use of the seashore which eliminates the need for the mainland visitor center.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND RECOMMENDATION

H.R. 6882 was introduced by Representative Bo Ginn on July 28, 1982. Hearings were held on the bill on August 16, 1982. The bill was considered on September 23, 1982 by the Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks. At that time the Subcommittee adopted an amendment to H.R. 6882 to make any payment by the Federal Government to the Okefenokee Rural Electric Corporation contingent upon an agreement which would assure electrical service to the Cumberland Island National Seashore and to require an audit of the Corporation's books as a basis for such payment to the Corporation. The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs ordered the bill favorably reported, as amended, by voice vote on September 29, 1982 and recommends it to the House.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 of H.R. 6882, as introduced, directs the Secretary of the Interior to provide reimbursement to the Okefenokee Rural Electric Membership Corporation for the cost of installing transmission lines, transformers, and electric meters on Cumberland Island, Georgia, and would require the Secretary to conduct an audit of the Corporation books to determine the amount to be paid in accordance with the provisions of the bill and also requires an agreement between the Corporation and the Secretary to assure continued electrical service for the Seashore.

Section 2 revises the boundary of the Cumberland Island National Seashore by excluding a tract of about 568 acres of privately owned land known as Point Peter on the Georgia mainland adjacent to the Cumberland Island National Seashore.

OVERSIGHT STATEMENT

The Committee intends to carefully monitor the implementation of this legislation to assure compliance with the intent of the Act, but no specific oversight hearings have been conducted on the matter. No recommendations were submitted to the Committee pursuant to Rule X, clause 2(b)(2).

COST AND BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE

The Committee feels that there will be a net savings to the Federal Government by enactment of this legislation because of acquisition and development costs saved by excluding the Point Peter area from the boundary of the seashore.

INFLATIONARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Pursuant to Rule X, clause 2(a)(4), the Committee finds that enactment of this measure would have no inflationary impact on the national economy.